



SPU Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC)

October 2, 2019 Meeting Notes
Seattle Municipal Tower, 700 Fifth Avenue
5:30 pm – 7:30 pm

*Chair: Dirk Wassink
Vice-Chair: Alessandra Pistoia*

Committee Members	Present?	SPU Staff	Role
Quinn Apuzzo	N	Sheryl Shapiro	CAC Program Manager
Emily Newcomer	Y	Sego Jackson	Solid Waste LOB Policy Liaison
Alan Garvey	Y	Susan Fife-Ferris	Solid Waste Planning and Program Management Division Director
Amelia Fujikawa (her last meeting)	Y	Katie Lynd	Strategic Communications Advisor for Solid Waste LOB
Adam Maurer	Y	Elise Evans	Sub for Program Coordinator (DWW Cap Proj Coord.)
Rachtha Dahn	N		
Alessandra Pistoia	Y		
Dirk Wassink	Y	Guests	
Nico Onoda-McGuire	Y	Shinichiro Matsui	Guest
Kelsie Blanthorn	N	Holly Scarlett	Guest (SPU DWW)
		Joel Dashnaw	Guest

1. Regular Business

- SWAC Chair, Dirk Wassink, called the meeting to order at 5:32 PM
- Members and guests introduced themselves. Prompted by the SWAC chair, they each shared “their favorite fall vegetable”
- Members helped indicate emergency exits and exit procedures.
- Meeting notes from September were NOT approved – this will happen at the Nov. meeting

2. SWAC Line of Business Updates

Sego Jackson, Solid Waste LOB Policy Liaison and Susan Fife-Ferris, Solid Waste Planning and Program Management Division Director, provided updates from the Solid Waste Line of Business

- Should we hold a December SWAC meeting at the regular time? This would be the evening of December 4, and on December 13 there is a large group producer responsibility meeting
 - This would defer SWAC officer elections to January, if December is skipped
 - A SWAC member asked if elections could happen electronically
 - Three quarters of the members must vote by the election date for the election to be valid
 - Voting may happen by paper ballot in person at a SWAC meeting or electronically

- The nomination period begins at the end of this meeting. Sego will email out nominee statements by November 25th. Wednesday, December 4th, close of business, will be the cut off for voting in elections.
 - Members acknowledged that December is busy for many people
 - A motion passed by SWAC members to cancel the December SWAC meeting
 - Check on the current status of the RSVP link for the December 13 Joint King County and Seattle SWAC meeting
- January 1 is the first Wednesday, when this meeting would typically be, but it's a holiday. January 8, the following Wednesday, is an option for rescheduling, and there is also discussion of holding a joint CAC meeting
- This is the time of year when we do officer nominations and hold a voting process
 - Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary are up for election
 - Existing officer positions last for one year, and one can be nominated by themselves or others
 - Candidates write a bio for themselves, everyone reads them, and voting happens
 - Dirk shared that as Chair, he typically facilitates the meeting, and Alessandra is essentially a Co-Chair, though she is listed as Vice-Chair. The officers have an extra meeting each month with Sego and Susan to plan the content. There is a big effort in June to generate the recycling rate report.
 - Alessandra shared that as Vice-Chair the planning process is very interesting, this officer role is a great opportunity to learn, and there is an available Secretary role that isn't currently filled.

3. Republic Material Recovery Facility Tour Debrief

- **A SWAC member** shared a PowerPoint of photos from the Republic MRF tour. He conveyed that sorting out the recycling was a human challenge because the conveyors move very quickly.
- **A SWAC member** shared that contamination is a challenge at the MRF
- **A SWAC member** shared that plastic food containers other than #1, 2, or 5 are more numerous than before, and also show up in shapes that aren't just bottles or jugs, which makes recycling a challenge
- **A SWAC member** shared that the pile of broken glass with syringes was striking to see
- **An SPU staff member** shared that plastic bags and wraps and Amazon packaging were a noticeable volume in the MRF, especially since these things aren't recyclable in our MRFs
- **An SPU staff member** shared that when the region went to comingled recycling, there was more contamination, but more participation in recycling overall

4. Bag Out! Removing Plastic Bags & Wrap from Curbside Recycling

Katie Lynd, SPU Solid Waste Strategic Communications Advisor, presented on the regional plan to remove plastic bags from curbside recycling.

- Aspirational recycling, customer confusion over the process, and China sword are some of the main reasons that plastic bags and wrap are a contaminant challenge in the system

- Plastic bags are an issue because: they cause contamination, they slow sorting equipment efficiency, and worker safety is at risk when removing this wrap
- Responsible Recycling Task Force is a regional approach to convey a united message on recycling
- There is a regional effort to communicate about the move to remove plastic bags and wrap from curbside recycling
 - In late 2019, communications will begin about the removal of bags from recycling
 - The policy/operational change goes into effect January 1, 2020
- Primary messages
 - Recycle right
 - Plastic bags and wrap are problematic
 - What to do instead
- Secondary messages
 - Don't bag recyclables
 - Find out where to recycle plastic bags and wrap (www.plasticfilmrecycling.org)
 - Reduce your use
 - There is no plan to fine residences for putting plastic bags or wrap in their recycling bin
- October 17, 2019 is a day that there will be an event at the Recology MRF to film the [plastic film] problem with media present for wider communications and a press release
- New SPU webpages called "Recycle Right" will explain this issue to customers with FAQs
- Social media outreach will happen across several platforms and will be translated into the top 7 regional languages
- SPU is working with King County Solid Waste Division and their consultant team from C+C
- **A SWAC member** asked how easy it would be for this outreach message to be conveyed on SPU utility bills
- **A SWAC member** asked if the annual residential guide can include this (Katie says yes, in the spring)
- **A SWAC member** asked if the messaging should be spread regionally
 - Staff members replied that yes, this is a coordinated regional message
- **A Guest** asked if it is a bigger problem that plastic bags clog the system when used to bag recyclables or that wish cycling is happening
 - SPU staff members said that both things are a problem, and that SPU is the minority as a jurisdiction in allowing plastic bags (bagged together) in curbside recycling
- **A SWAC member** asked if Ridwell (a local startup company) accepts plastic film and if SPU would look to partner with them
 - **An SPU staff member** replied that SPU will not promote private businesses
- **A SWAC member** asked how long this campaign might take to be effective and how successful this type of campaign has been historically
 - An SPU staff member said that historically, the recycling messages have been to include more materials in the collection, and not to remove things, so we will see what happens here. It will take time to change people's behavior. King County is doing some benchmarking via waste composition studies.

5. Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan Amendment update

SWAC Chair, Dirk Wassink, and Vice-Chair, Alessandra Pistoia, led SWAC members through a series of breakout group discussions on portions of the Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan Amendment update. Members had been pre-assigned one section and self-selected another section, and were asked to use a few of the following screens to evaluate the recommendations:

- ✓ Mistakes. Are there any errors that should be corrected?
- ✓ Readability. Does the section read clearly and have good emphasis?
- ✓ Race & Social Justice. Does this section effectively anticipate or address community impacts and engagement?
- ✓ Good strategy. Are there missing ideas that should be included, or ideas that should not be included?
- ✓ Personal concerns. Are there any aspects of the recommendations or the writing that give you concern?

Introduction (3 min)

Full Group discussion of “Cross-cutting” (8 min)

- It is important to include RSJI principles in solid waste plans
- The third bullet felt redundant and vague in a way that implied a lack of definitive action on this
- The language to “consider” adopting action in solid waste was vague – take out the word “consider” making the goal of action more clear
- It would be ideal to work with organizations already embedded in low income of color rather than individuals to reach these target audiences more effectively
- The second bullet point was vague – it says to engage communities, but it would be best to explain how this outreach is planned
- If “innovation labs” is in quotation marks, then it should be explained
- This section needs to be fleshed out more and used as a lens throughout the other sections

First breakout groups on “Education, Outreach and Code Compliance” and “Waste Prevention” (choose one) (12 min)

Education, Outreach, & Code Compliance:

- The education and outreach section does not detail how the racial equity toolkit would be used, and it needs to be referenced consistently and clearly
- There is a lack of examples of what campaigns would focus on
- **A SWAC member** believes that the whole plan could be organized better, and suggested either including education and outreach in each topic or include every topic in the outreach section
- When discussing school education and outreach, it would be nice to include examples of the existing pilot programs in schools
- Two bullets (3 & 6) which reference C&D diversion seem to be saying the same thing

Waste Prevention:

- **A SWAC member** found the overall document organization confusing and suggested heading each section with a few sentences explaining the goals of the section. Also, they suggest ending every bullet point with a period, or not at all
- Some geographic areas in the region don't have as much access to waste services, and this should be addressed, to identify who is engaging in curbside collection
- The first bullet talks about surveys, but the reason and format of surveys should be more clear
- All the things that come before recycling fall into the category of waste prevention
- This section could be relabeled to be more specific, or include other topics such as C&D waste
- There could have been more of a call out to address connectivity between businesses in waste prevention and how they can support these goals
- We are missing the market support of businesses in waste prevention goals
- This section should call out cross-cutting (racial equity) more, and how it applies to this section
- Page 7, the first bullet point, has grammar errors

Second breakout groups on "Recycling/Composting Planning, Policies and Programs" and "Construction & Demolition Debris"

(choose one)(12 min)

Recycling/Composting Planning, Policies and Programs:

- Page 8, first paragraph – build out the strategies about how to address capture rates
- Would be more effective to say explicitly that this plastic bag removal from recycling is effective January 1, 2020
- End of page 9 describes the recycling task force, and this could be clearer - the bullets seem disjointed
- End of page 5 vs page 9, Human prosperity is used synonymous with social harm, as a term, and they should pick one concept. It would be ideal to discuss this concept in the positive

Construction & Demolition Debris:

- Racial equity and the RSJI toolkit need to be spelled out more in this section
- **A SWAC member** asked why C&D waste needs to be thought of as a separate category of waste
- Who is the audience of this management plan? It seems to be written for SPU staff, but the tone might be different with other customers in mind
- It would be ideal if this were more readable for an involved customer
- The last three sections reference SWAC recommendations, which the SWAC members like
- There is education and outreach information in the C&D section, and this is applicable to every section, so it is important to be intentional with the organization of information

Reporting to large group and discussion of whether to make any SWAC comments (15 min)

- **A SWAC member** (chair) proposed that SWAC could submit a cohesive document of SWAC comments, or choose to each submit individual comments during the public comment period
- **An SPU staff member** said that if there were a few main points from SWAC about the Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan Amendment, that's great, but individual comments would still be useful to address personal thoughts and details of each section

6. Around the Table & Community Insights

- Segó will not attend the SWAC meeting in November
- **A SWAC member** shared that this is Amelia's last official meeting with SWAC, and the committee honored her service

Adjourned 7:37 pm

DRAFT